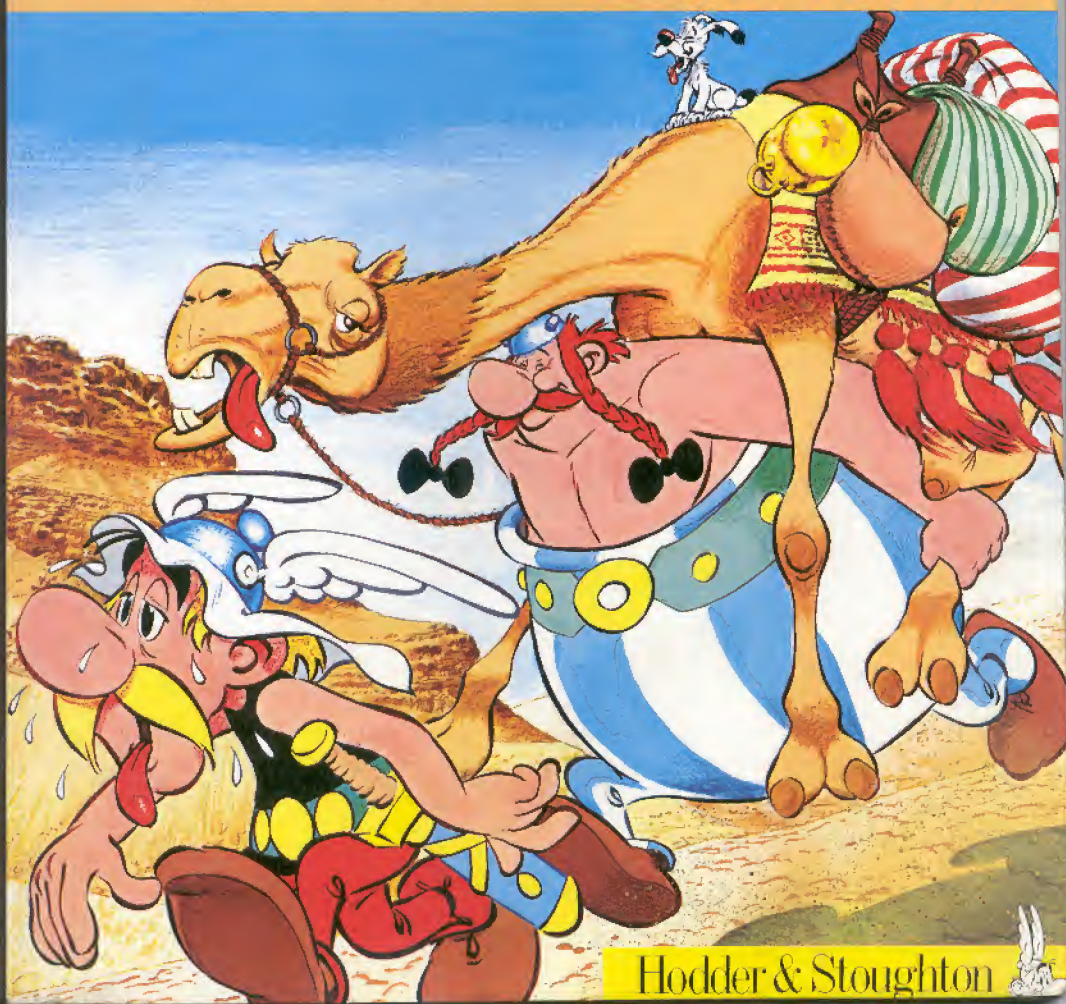


R. GOSCINNY - A. UDERZO

Asterix AND THE BLACK GOLD

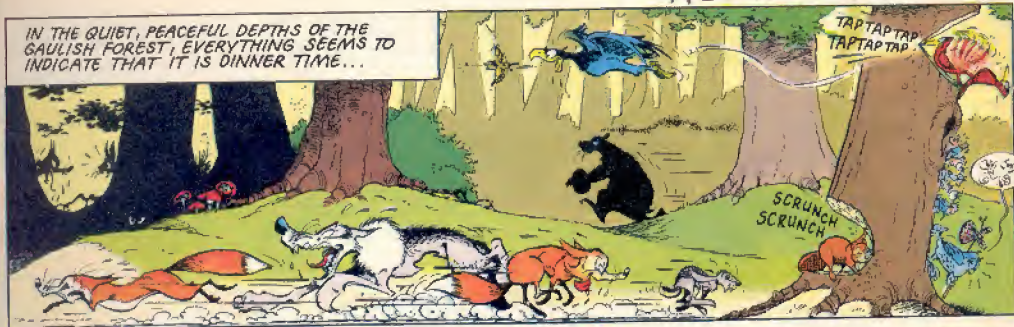
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY UDERZO



Hodder & Stoughton



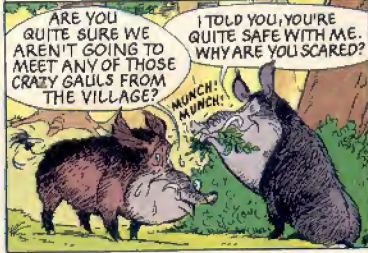
IN THE QUIET, PEACEFUL DEPTHS OF THE GAULISH FOREST, EVERYTHING SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT IT IS DINNER TIME...



... BUT SOME OF THE FOREST DWELLERS HAVE LOST THEIR APPETITES.



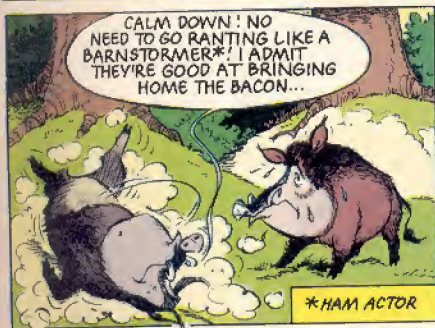
(AUTHOR'S NOTE: WITH APOLOGIES TO PURISTS, WE PROVIDE A DUBBED VERSION TO FACILITATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIALOGUE.)



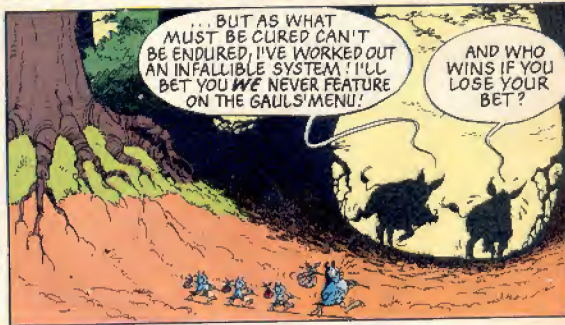
BECAUSE THEY'VE WOLFED DOWN, SCRUNCHED, CRUNCHED AND GOBBLED UP MY WHOLE HERD, AND I AM THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF A LARGE FAMILY, THAT'S WHY!!!



CALM DOWN! NO NEED TO GO RANTING LIKE A BARNSTORMER*! I ADMIT THEY'RE GOOD AT BRINGING HOME THE BACON...



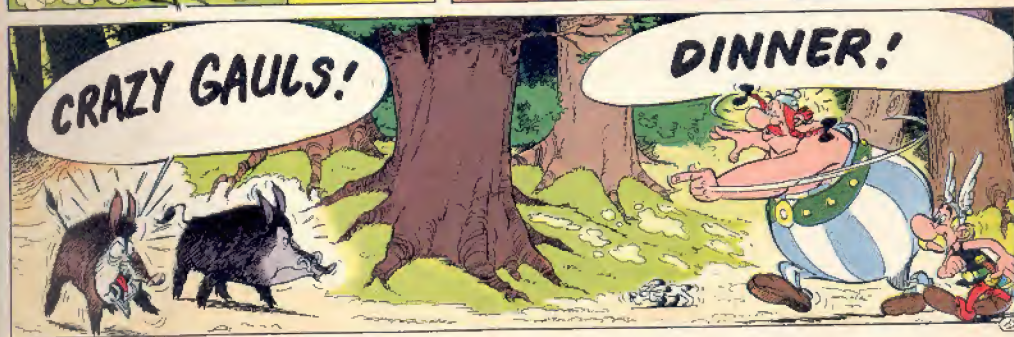
... BUT AS WHAT MUST BE CURED CAN'T BE ENDURED, I'VE WORKED OUT AN INFALLIBLE SYSTEM! I'LL BET YOU ~~W~~E NEVER FEATURE ON THE GAULS' MENU!

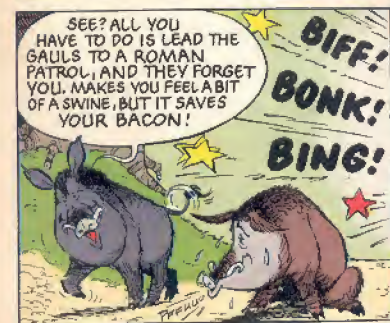
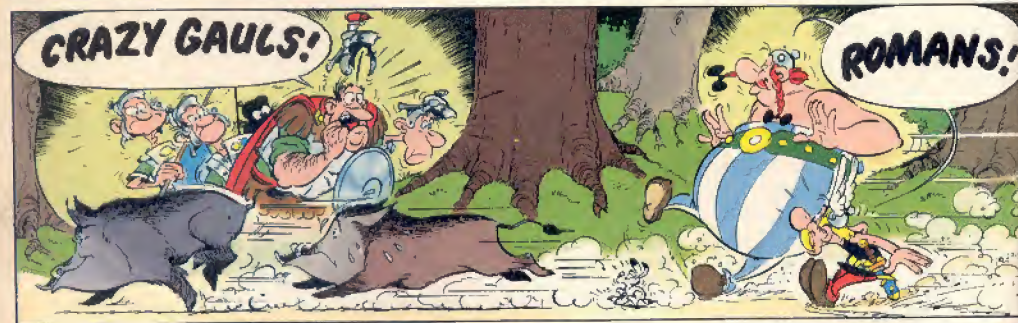
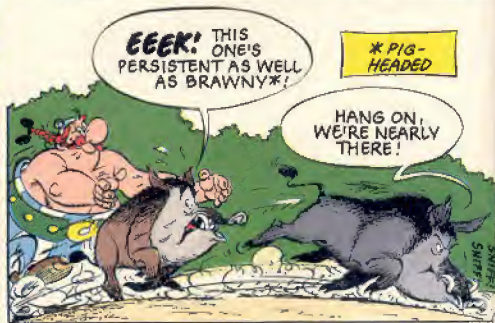
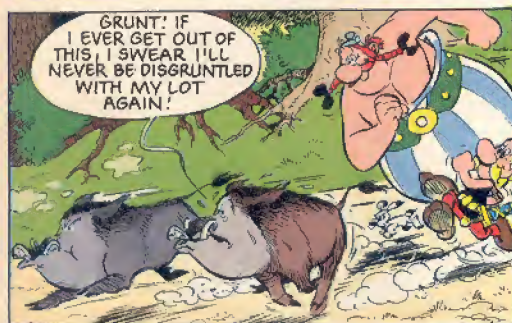
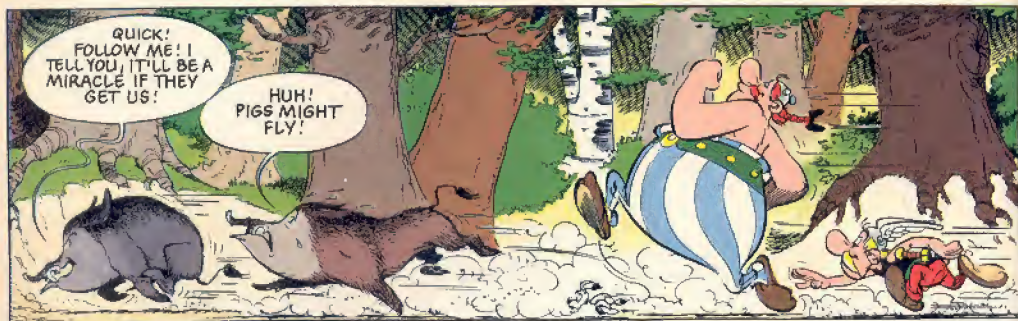


AND WHO WINS IF YOU LOSE YOUR BET?

CRAZY GAULS!

DINNER!





IN ROME...

NO, WE MOST CERTAINLY CAN'T HAVE THIS!!!

THAT ARMORICAN VILLAGE IS STILL HOLDING THE MIGHT OF ROME UP TO RIDICULE!

AND I HEAR THAT MY LEGIONS NOW HAVE TO FACE HORDS OF WILD BEASTS!

THE MORALE OF MY TROOPS IS AT ROCK BOTTOM, AND I AM THE LAUGHING STOCK OF MY ENEMIES IN THE SENATE!

AS WE ALL KNOW, WE HAVE FAILED TO CONQUER THOSE INDOMITABLE GAULS BY FORCE, CORRUPTION, OR EVEN KIDNAPPING, AND YET...

M. DEVIUS SURREPTITIUS, YOU'RE CHIEF OF MY SECRET SERVICE, M.I. II. IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA, BY JUPITER, LET'S HEAR IT!

O CAESAR, THE SECRETS OF THE DRUIDS ARE PASSED ON ONLY FROM DRUID TO DRUID BY WORD OF MOUTH!

WHAT ABOUT IT?

SIMPLE! NO ONE BUT A DRUID WHO IS ALSO SPYING FOR US CAN OBTAIN AND PASS ON THE RECIPE OF THAT MAGIC POTION WHICH MAKES THE GAULS INVINCIBLE!

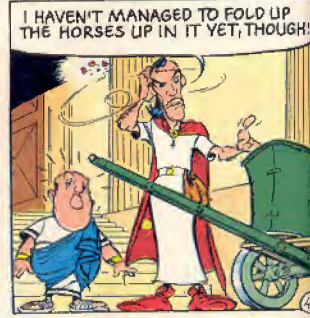
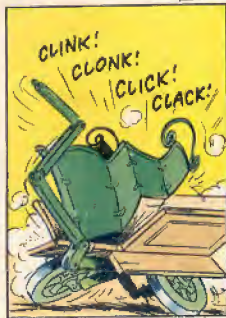
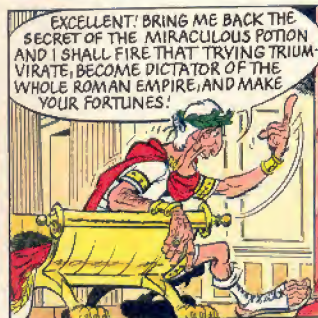
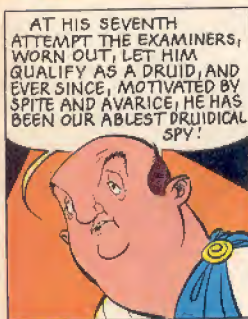
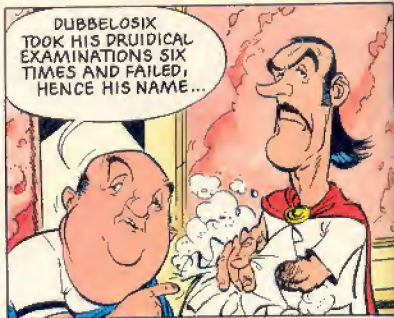
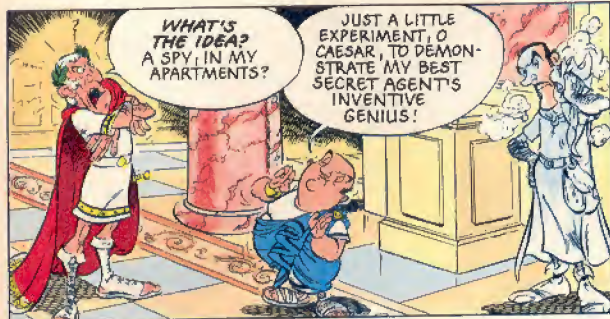
AND AMONG MY AGENTS I HAVE JUST SUCH A DRUID!

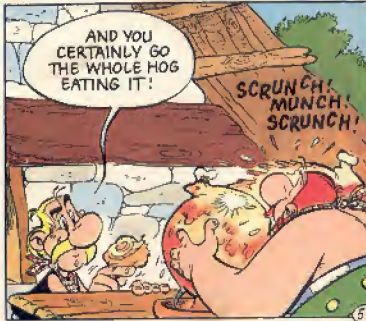
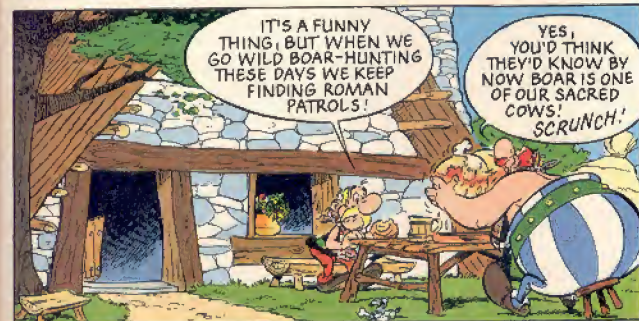
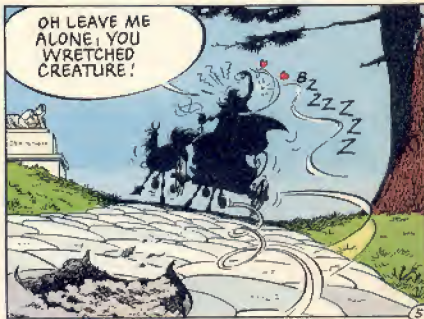
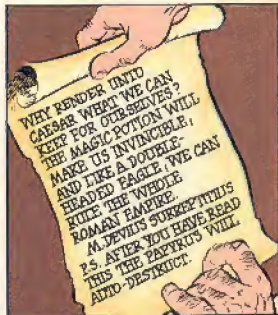
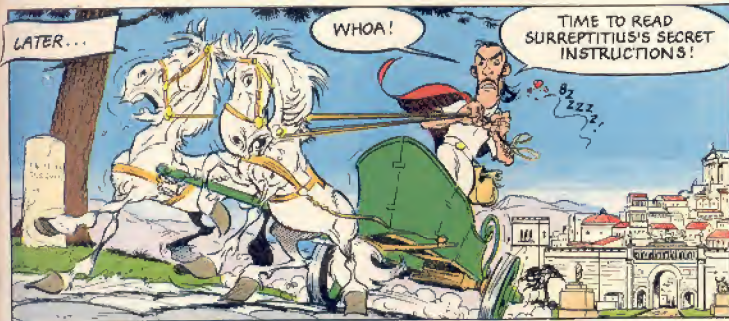
THEN WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? FETCH HIM!

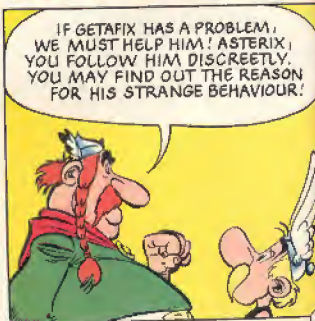
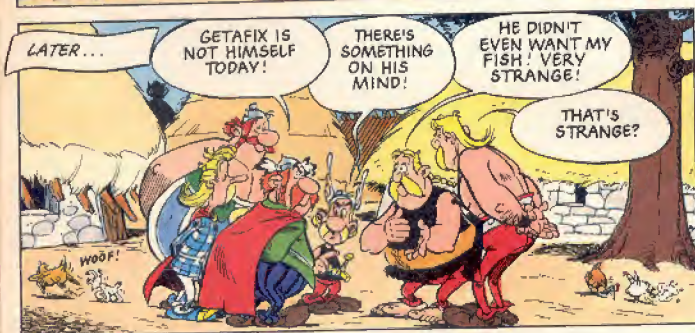
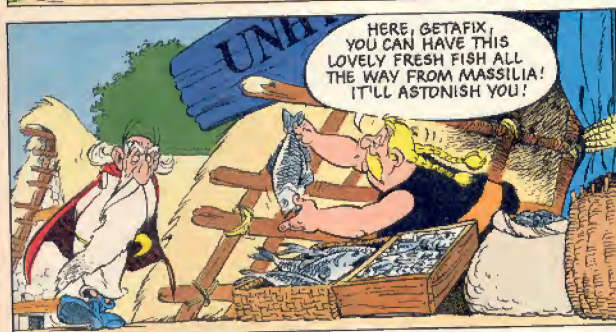
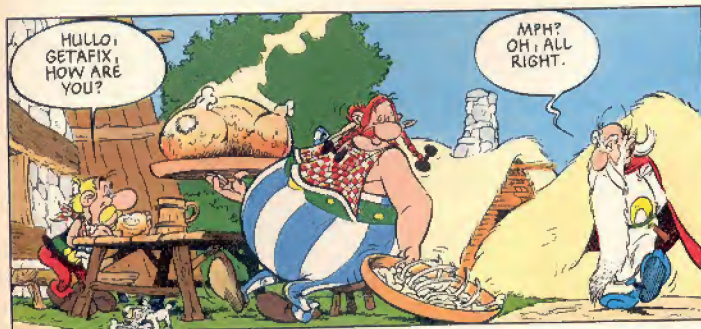
HE'S ALREADY HERE, CAESAR, QUITE CLOSE TO YOU!

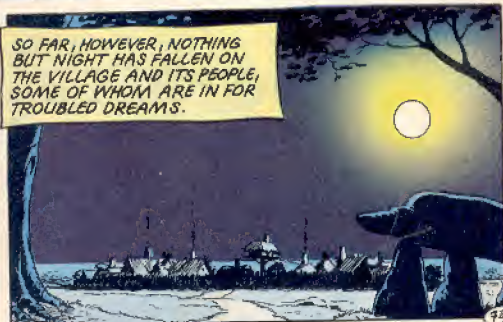
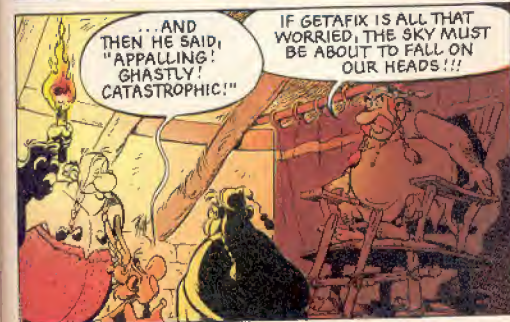
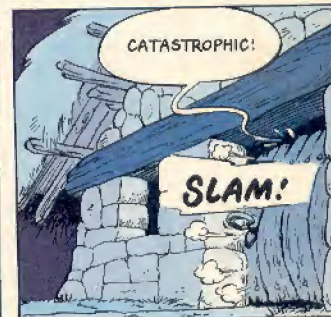
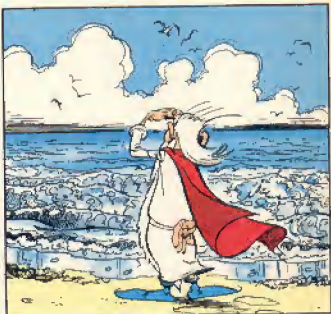
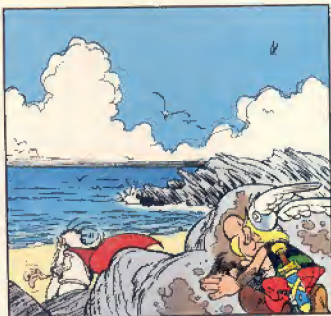
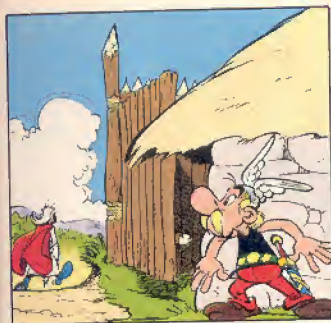
?!?

YOU CAN COME DOWN FROM YOUR PEDESTAL NOW, DUBBELD-SIX!









SO FAR, HOWEVER, NOTHING BUT NIGHT HAS FALLEN ON THE VILLAGE AND ITS PEOPLE, SOME OF WHOM ARE IN FOR TROUBLED DREAMS.

BUT NEXT MORNING...

COME QUICKLY!
EKONOMIKRISIS THE
PHOENICIAN MERCHANT
HAS LANDED ON
THE BEACH!!!

HE'S
HERE! AT
LAST!!

HULLO,
ASTERIX!
NICE DAY,
ISN'T IT?

?!

I WOULDN'T MIND
TASTING YOUR NEW BARREL
OF BEER, VITALSTATISTIX!
DON'T FORGET!

?!

MMM! YOUR
FISH HAS A REALLY
INTERESTING AROMA,
UNHYGIENIX!

?!?

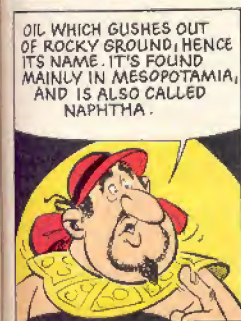
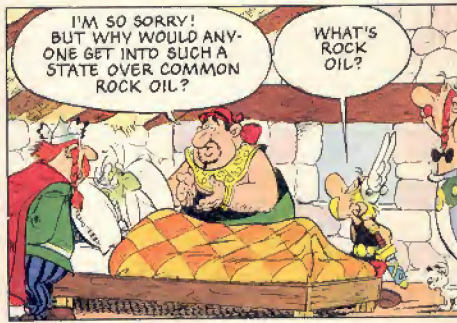
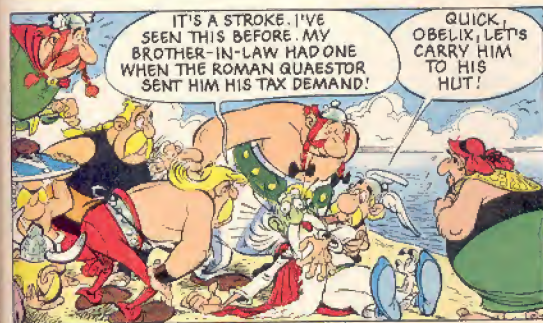
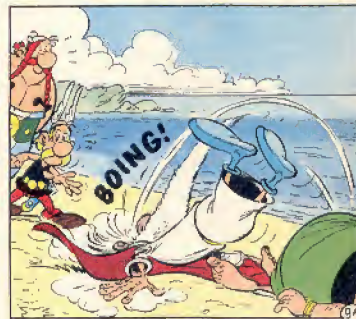
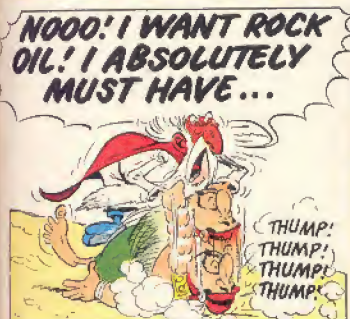
SO GETAFIX
WAS WAITING FOR
EKONOMIKRISIS
AND HIS CARGO!

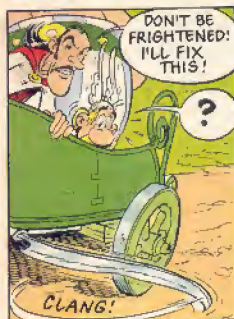
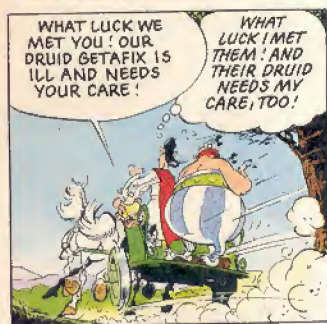
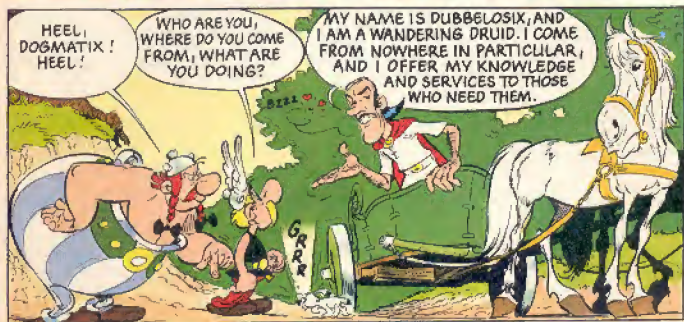
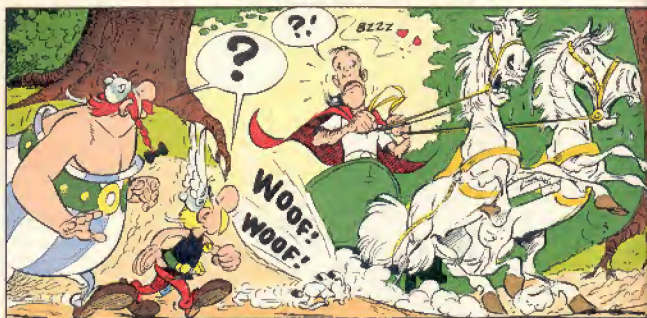
AND HE
APPRECIATED
MY FISH, SO
THERE!

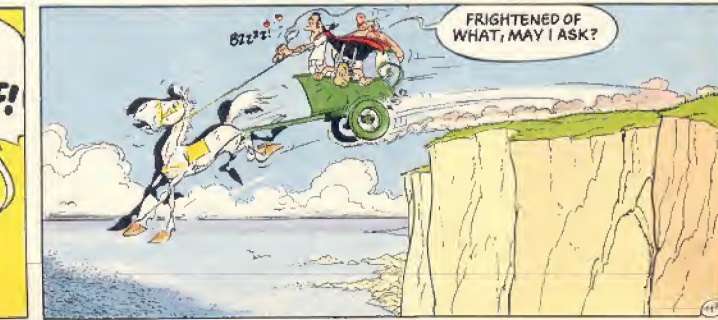
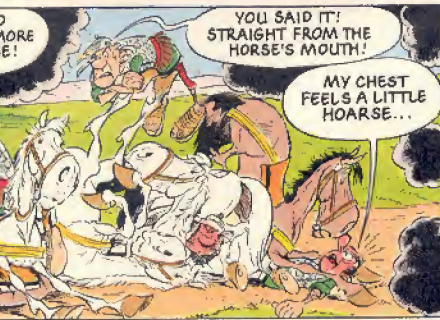
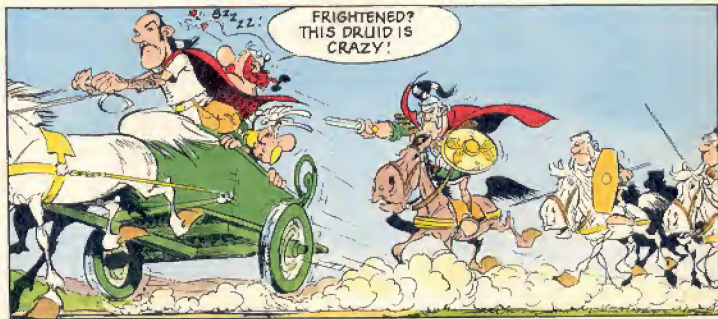
THAT'S
WHAT WORRIES
ME. ANYONE IN THAT
STATE MUST BE ON
THE BRINK OF
SUICIDE!

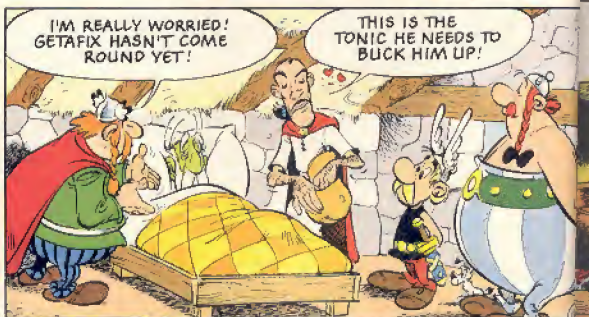
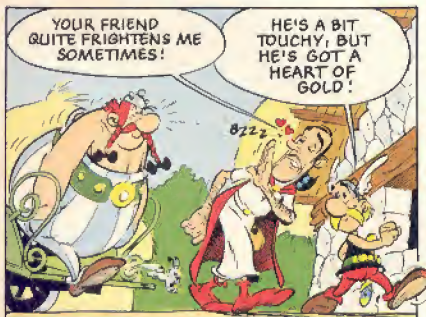
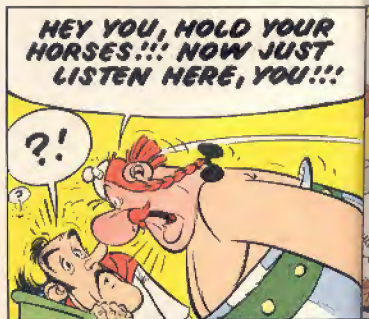
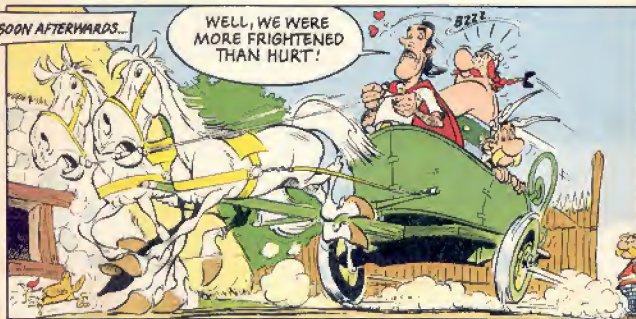
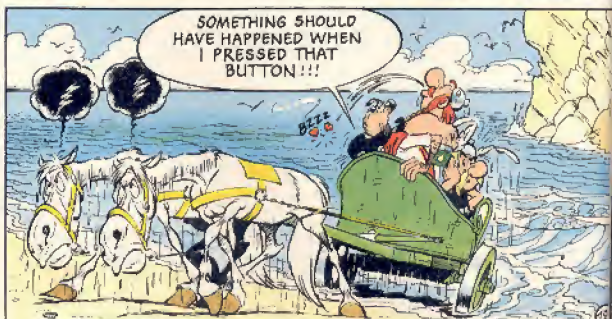
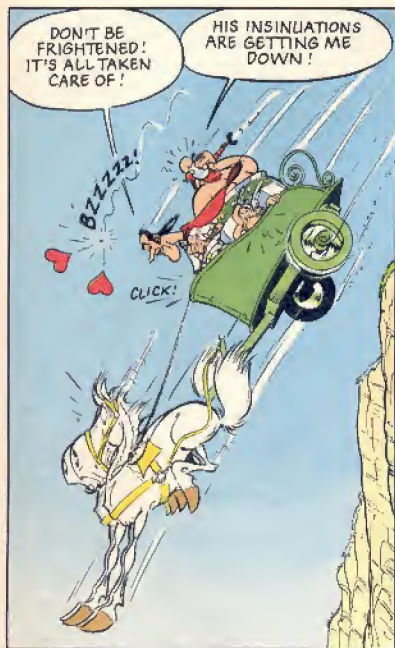
HERE YOU ARE AT LAST,
EKONOMIKRISIS, OLD CHAP!

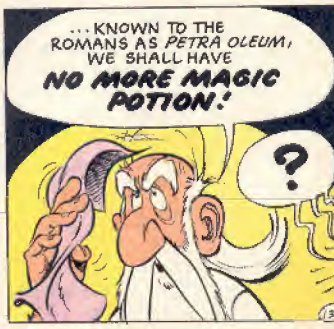
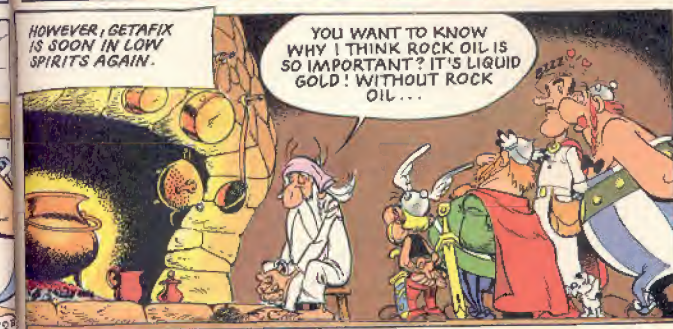
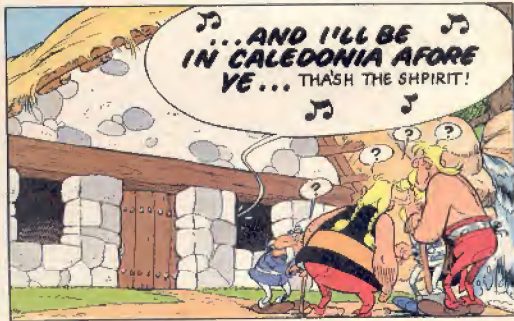
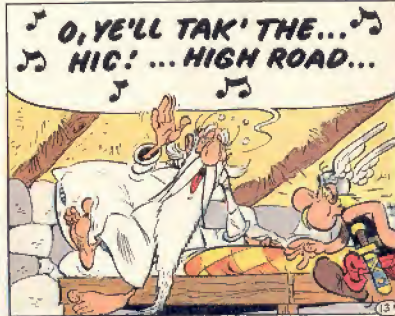
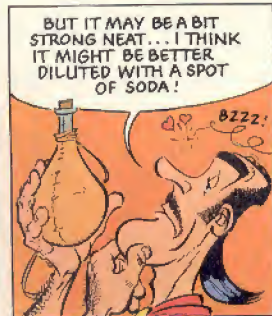
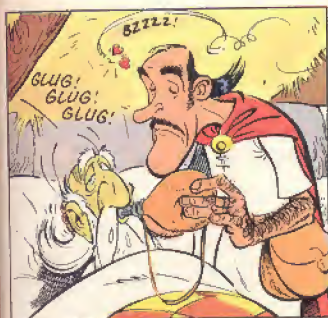
HULLO THERE, GETAFIX! I'VE
BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO
SEEING YOU ALL AGAIN EVER SINCE
MY LAST VOYAGE! LOOK WHAT
I'VE BROUGHT FROM TYRE,
SPECIALLY FOR YOU!

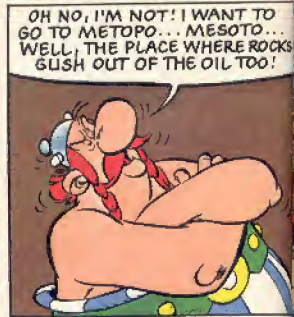
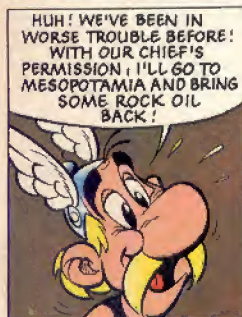
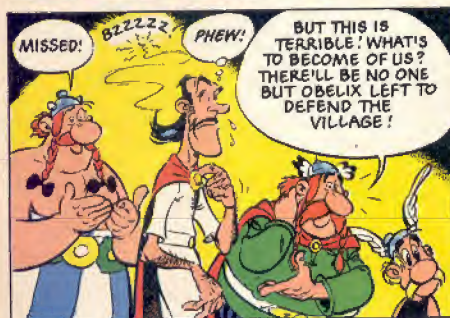
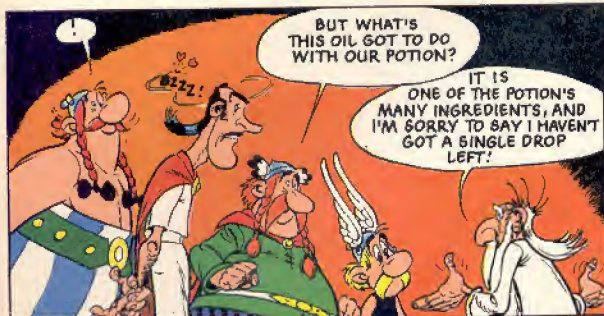


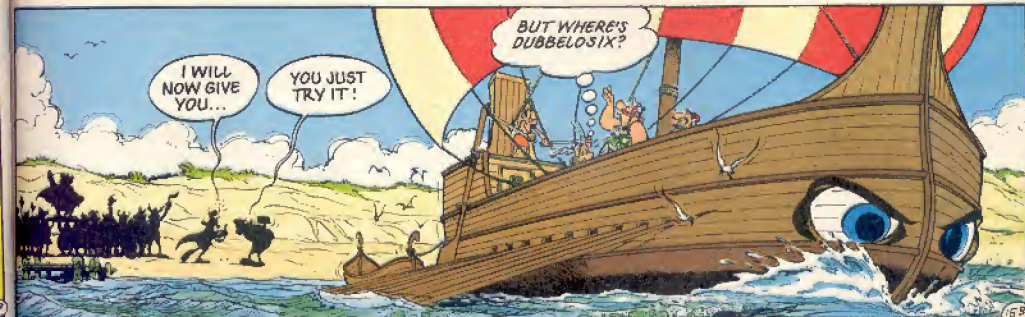
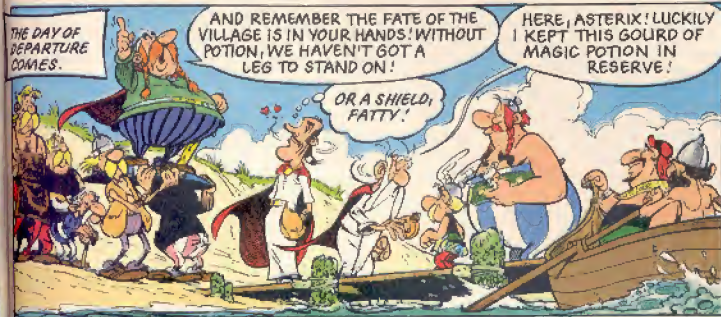
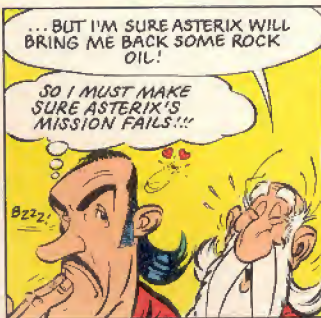


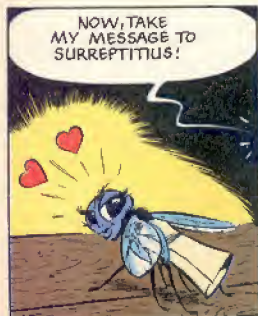












NOW, TAKE MY MESSAGE TO SURREPTITIUS!



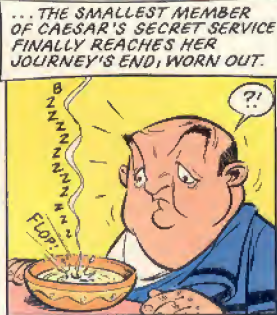
NO PAWDLING ON THE WAY! IT'S URGENT!



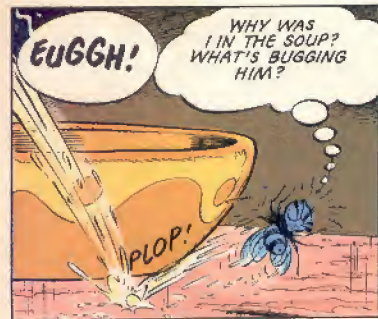
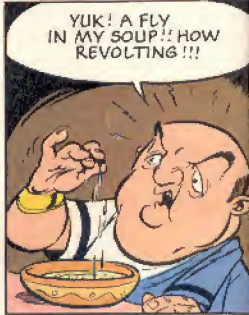
AND SO THE DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS MISSION OF THE CARRIER FLY BEGINS. FACING STORMS...



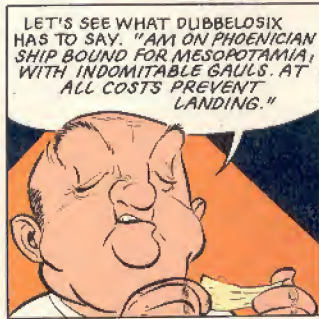
...AND MANY OTHER PERILS...



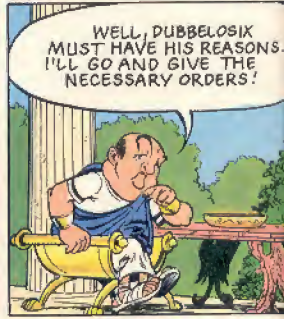
...THE SMALLEST MEMBER OF CAESAR'S SECRET SERVICE FINALLY REACHES HER JOURNEY'S END, WORN OUT.



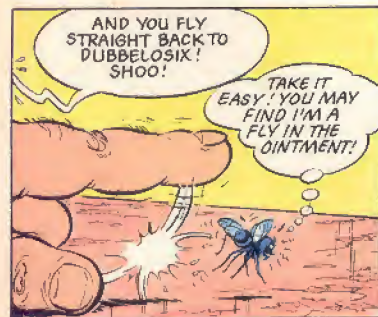
WHY WAS I IN THE SOUP? WHAT'S BUGGING HIM?



LET'S SEE WHAT DUBBELOSIX HAS TO SAY. "AM ON PHOENICIAN SHIP BOUND FOR MESOPOTAMIA, WITH INDOMITABLE GAULS. AT ALL COSTS PREVENT LANDING."

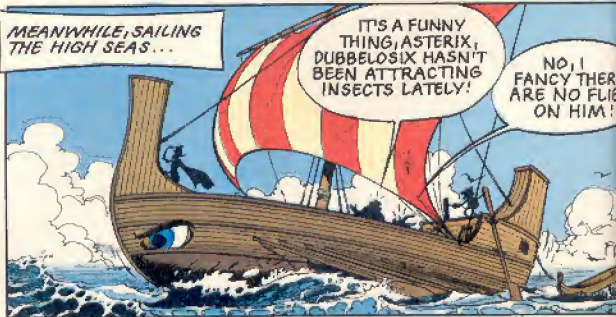


WELL, DUBBELOSIX MUST HAVE HIS REASONS. I'LL GO AND GIVE THE NECESSARY ORDERS!



AND YOU FLY STRAIGHT BACK TO DUBBELOSIX! SHOO!

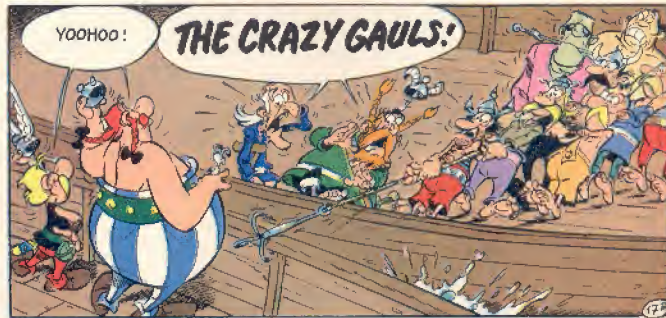
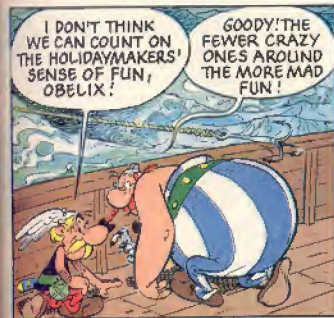
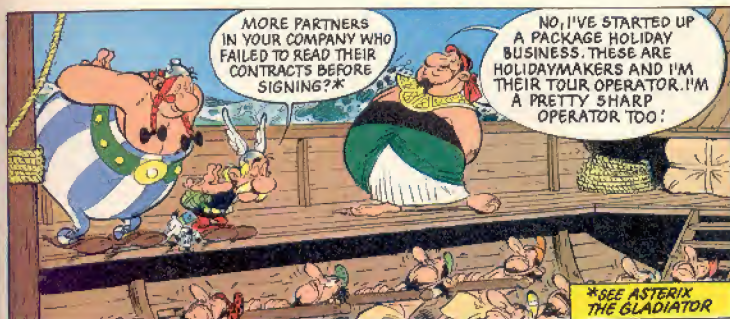
TAKE IT EASY! YOU MAY FIND I'M A FLY IN THE OINTMENT!

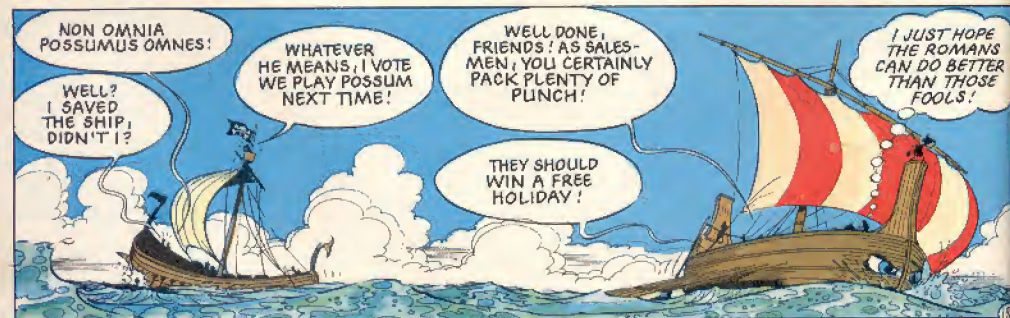
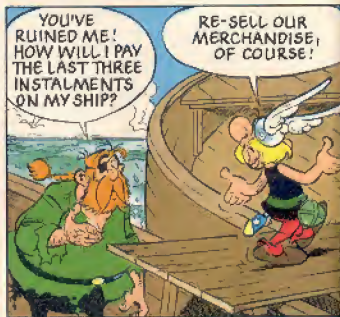
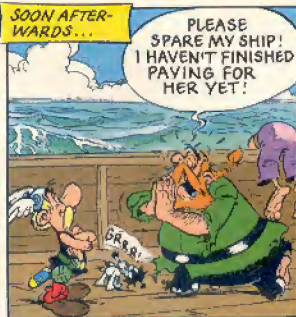
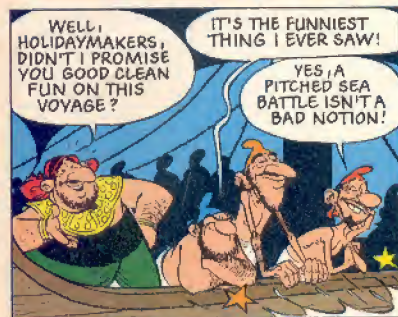


MEANWHILE, SAILING THE HIGH SEAS...

IT'S A FUNNY THING, ASTERIX, DUBBELOSIX HASN'T BEEN ATTRACTING INSECTS LATELY!

NO, I FANCY THERE ARE NO FLIES ON HIM!





AND JUST THEN...

SAIL
AHOY, MR
OPERATOR!

...A ROMAN GALLEY SAILS
INTO THEIR KEN.

PHOENICIAN
SHIP AHEAD!

IT MUST
BE THE ONE
CARRYING THOSE
INDOMITABLE GAULS
WE HEARD
ABOUT!

NOW FOR
A GREAT DISPLAY
OF NAVAL
OPERATIONS,
ROMAN FASHION!
MY MAGNUM
OPUS! *

REMEMBER
CAESAR WANTS
THIS OP TO
SUCCEED,
CAPTAIN!

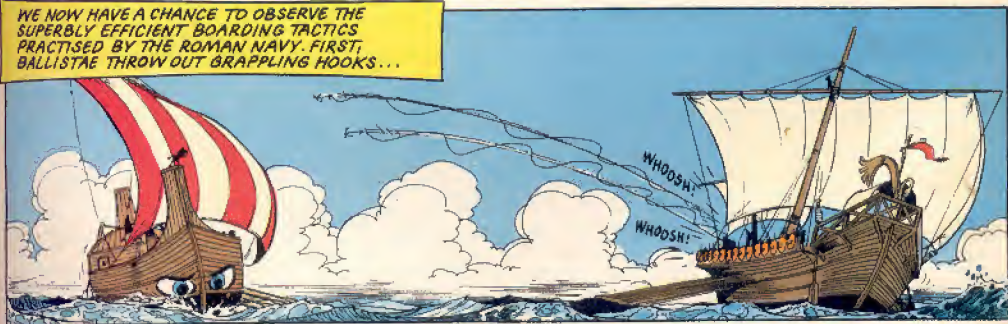
*IN FACT, THE
CAPTAIN'S OP. No. 1

GOODY!
ROMANS! NOW
FOR SOME FUN
AT LAST!

SOMETHING
TELLS ME
THEY'RE NOT
HERE FOR
FUN!

THE FLY HAS
DELIVERED MY MESSAGE
ALL RIGHT! WELL DONE
THE SECRET
SERVICE!

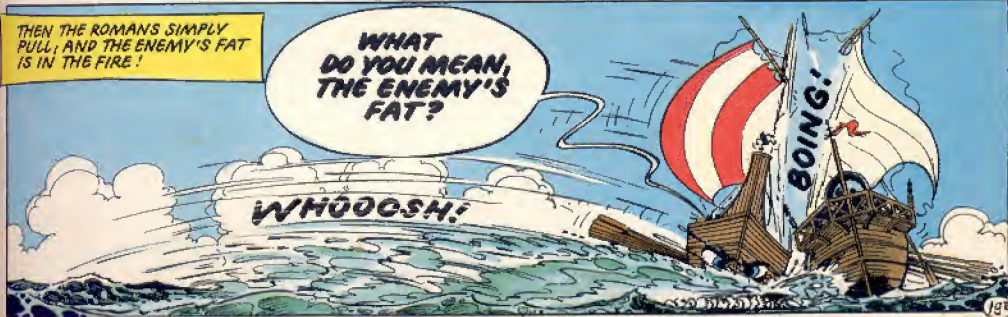
WE NOW HAVE A CHANCE TO OBSERVE THE
SUPERBLY EFFICIENT BOARDING TACTICS
PRACTISED BY THE ROMAN NAVY. FIRST,
BALLISTAE THROW OUT GRAPPLING HOOKS...

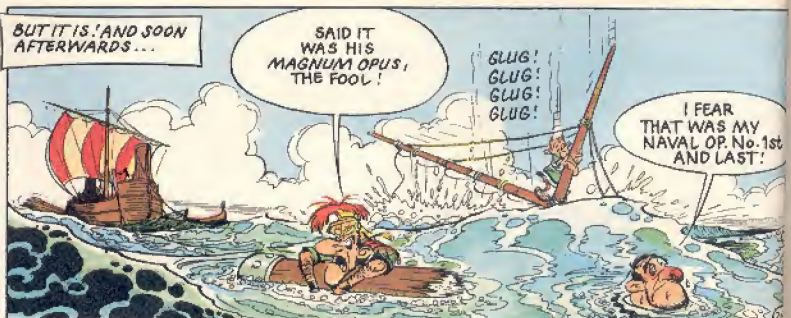
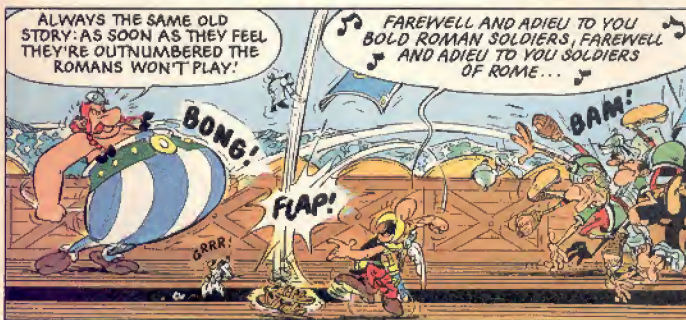
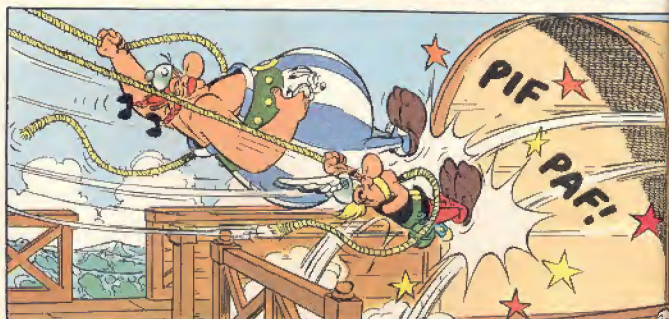
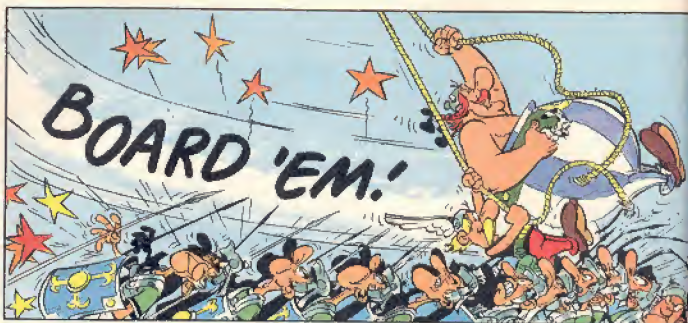


THEN THE ROMANS SIMPLY
PULL, AND THE ENEMY'S FAT
IS IN THE FIRE!

WHAT
DO YOU MEAN,
THE ENEMY'S
FAT?

WHOOSH!





AND ONCE AGAIN...

ROMAN GALLEY
AHOY, MR
OPERATOR.

... THE NOVY CLASSIC
BOARDING TACTICS...

BONG!

... ARE FOLLOWED
BY AN EQUALLY
TRADITIONAL
FIGHT AND ITS
AFTERMATH.

WE'RE
HAVING FUN,
AREN'T WE,
ASTERIX?

YES,
BUT IT SEEMS
ODD FOR THE ROMANS
TO BE SO KEEN ON
FIGHTING US,
OBELIX!

EVERY TIME I
SEE IT AGAIN I FIND
SOMETHING ELSE TO
APPRECIATE!

BUT IN ROME...

BY JUPITER,
THEY SHALL FEEL
THE ANGER OF CAESAR!
I'LL HAVE ALL THE
MEDITERRANEAN
PORTS
BLOCKADED!

AND LOOK SHARP!
I DON'T EXPECT MY NAVAL
COMMANDERS TO STOP AND
CONTEMPLATE ANY
NAVELS! *

*POPULAR MEDITERRANEAN
FRUIT

I WANT TO MAKE
SURE NOT EVEN A
FLY COULD GET THROUGH
THE NET!

HM... AND
THINKING OF
FLIES...

SURREPTITIUS!

ANY NEWS OF YOUR
AGENT DUBBEL... DUBBEL
SOMETHING?

I'M AFRAID
WE HAVE A
COMMUNICATIONS
PROBLEM, O
CAESAR!

PROBLEM? WHAT SORT OF PROBLEM?

OUR CARRIER FLY IS GOING SLOW, AND IF SHE ACTUALLY GOES ON STRIKE...

PROBLEM? WHAT SORT OF PROBLEM?

OUR CARRIER FLY IS GOING SLOW, AND IF SHE ACTUALLY GOES ON STRIKE...

WELL, IF IT'S WILDLIFE WE'RE DISCUSSING, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND OUT IF THE LIONS IN THE CIRCUS ARE ON HUNGER STRIKE?!..!

BONK.

WELL, IF IT'S WILDLIFE WE'RE DISCUSSING, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND OUT IF THE LIONS IN THE CIRCUS ARE ON HUNGER STRIKE?!..!

BONK.

I MUST TRY TO ENTICE HER BACK...

WHERE'S A PRETTY FLY, THEN...?

HONEY

I MUST TRY TO ENTICE HER BACK...

WHERE'S A PRETTY FLY, THEN...?

HONEY

EMERGING FROM ITS NAVAL CAMPAIGN, THE PHOENICIAN SHIP SAILS PEACEFULLY ON ITS WAY.

A map of the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding regions. The sea is blue, and the land is orange. Labels include GAUL, HISPANIA, ITALY, GREECE, TYRE, EGYPT, and MESOPOTAMIA. A black line with arrows shows a route starting from Tyre, passing through the Mediterranean, and exiting the sea into the Atlantic Ocean near HISPANIA.

ASTERIX, I'M TIRED OF THIS VOYAGE, AND I GET HUNGRY WHEN I'M TIRED.

WAIT A BIT LONGER, OBELIX. WE SHOULD SOON BE LANDING AT TYRE!

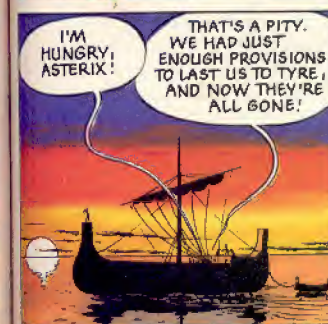
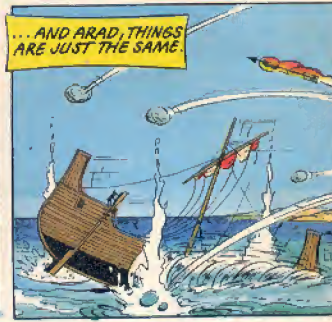
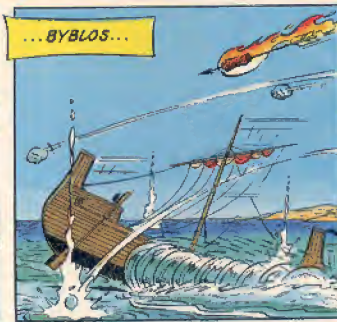
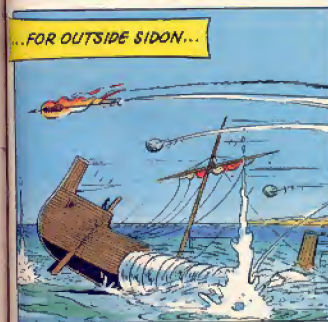
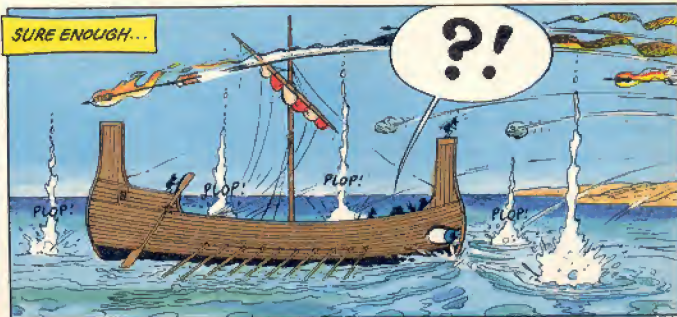
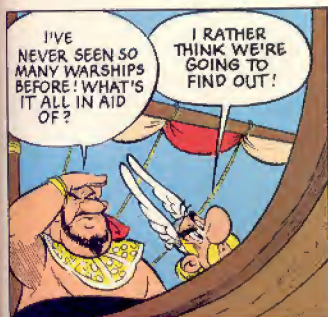
ASTERIX, I'M TIRED OF THIS VOYAGE, AND I GET HUNGRY WHEN I'M TIRED.

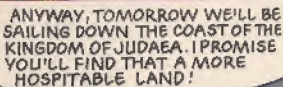
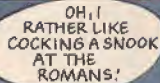
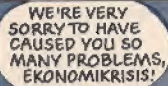
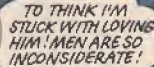
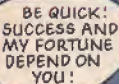
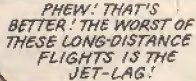
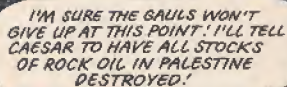
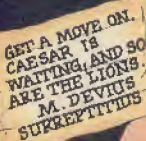
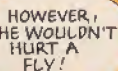
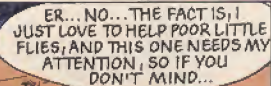
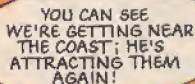
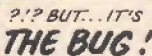
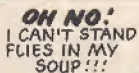
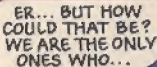
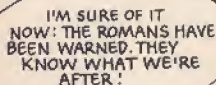
WAIT A BIT LONGER, OBELIX. WE SHOULD SOON BE LANDING AT TYRE!

DON'T TIRE NOW, HERE COMES TYRE!



BUT ONE OF THE FINEST OF PHOENICIAN TRADING PORTS HAS BECOME INACCESSIBLE. THE HARBOUR MOUTH IS BLOCKED BY BIREMES, TRIREMES, QUADRIREMES AND QUINGUIREMES.





NEXT MORNING...

THERE'S THE
PROMISED LAND,
ASTERIX!

GO TO JERUSALEM AND TELL SAMSON
ALIUS I SENT YOU. HE'S MY SUPPLIER:
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET ROCK
OIL FROM HIM.

THANKS, EKONOMI-
KRISIS! SEE YOU SOON,
MAYBE!

I HOPE SO!
TRAVELLING
WITH YOU IS AN
ENRICHING
EXPERIENCE!

AND I'M STILL
HUNGRY: DO YOU
THINK THERE ARE
ANY WILD BOARS
HERE?

NEVER MIND
THAT. WE'VE GOT TO
FIND OUR WAY!

THERE'S
SOMEONE
WHO MIGHT BE
ABLE TO
HELP US!

HULLO, FRIEND!
CAN YOU TELL US
THE WAY TO
JERUSALEM?

MY DONKEY AND I
ARE GOING THERE OUR-
SELVES! LET'S JOIN
FORCES!

MY NAME'S
JOSHUA BEN
ZEDRIN.

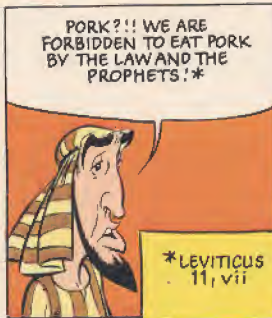
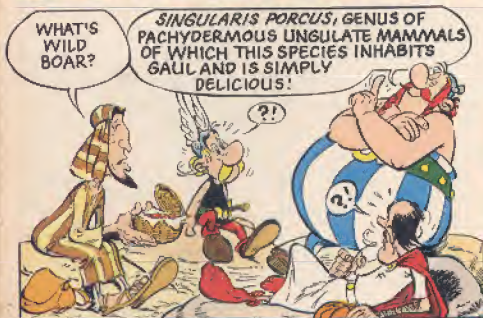
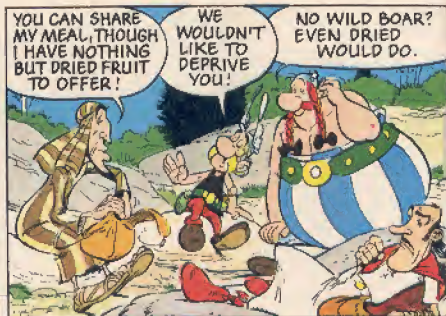
I'M ASTERIX.
MEET OBELIX,
DOGMATIX, AND
DUBBELSIX THE DRUID!

WE'VE COME
FROM GAUL TO
BUY ROCK OIL
FROM THE
MERCHANT
SAMSON
ALIUS.

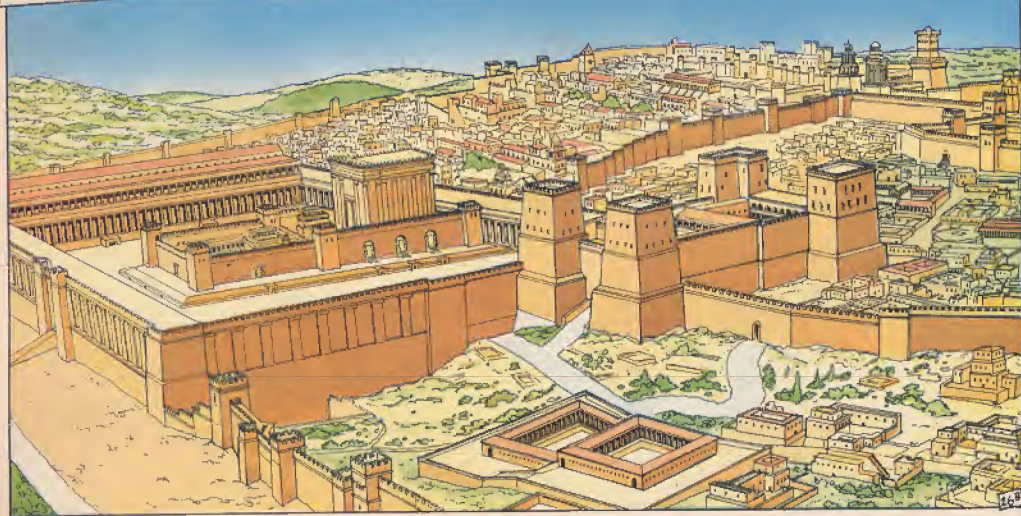
I WOULDN'T
HAVE THOUGHT
ANYONE WOULD
COME SO FAR
FOR THAT!

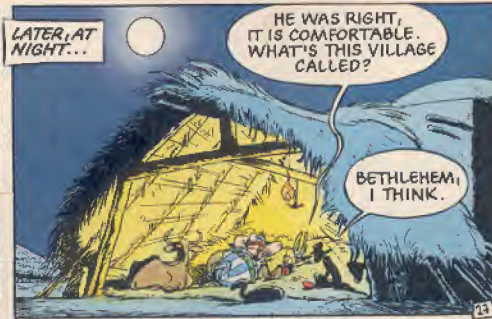
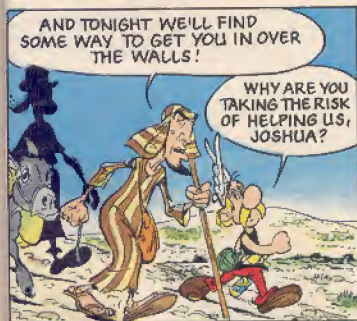
ARE
THERE MANY
ROMANS
HERE?

NOT AS MANY AS IN
PHOENICIA. THAT'S A
ROMAN PROVINCE. WE'RE
ONLY A PROTECTORATE,
AND THE ROMANS DON'T
HAVE A STRONG GARRISON
IN JERUSALEM!

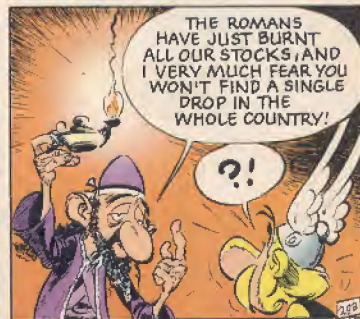
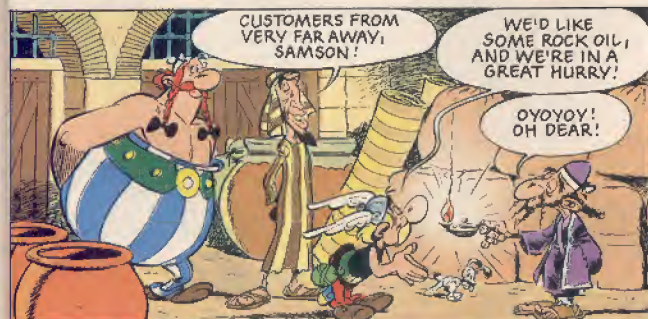
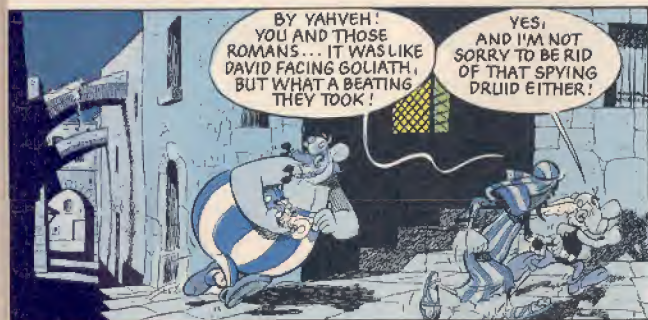


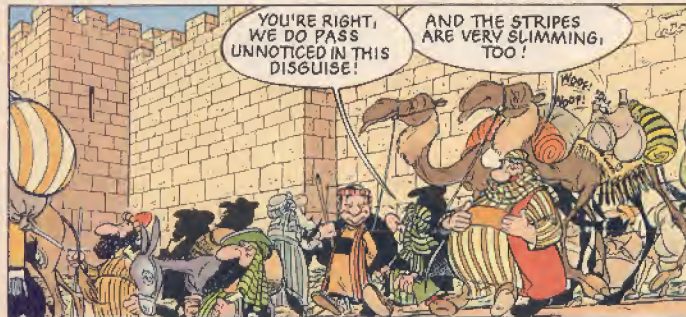
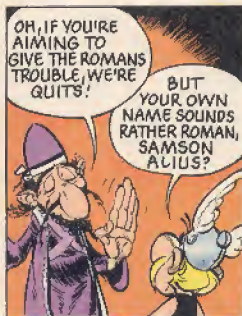
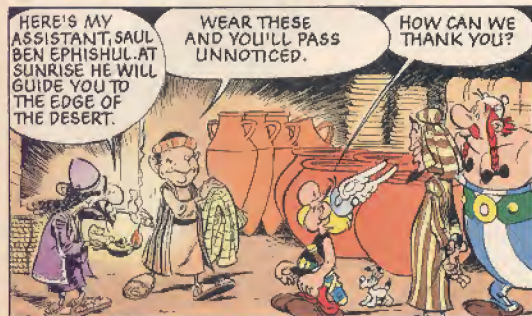
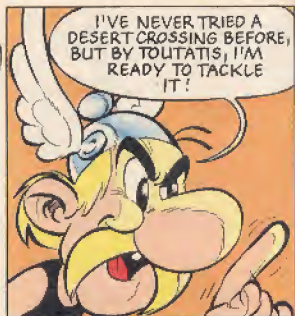
AT LAST, AFTER SEVERAL DAYS ON THE ROAD, OUR FRIENDS ARRIVE IN JERUSALEM, THE GREAT ROYAL CITY BEHIND ITS HIGH WALLS, LATER TO OPEN ITS GATES TO ALL THE FAITHS OF THE WORLD.











AT THE ROMAN PROCURATOR'S PALACE...

AVE, O PONTIUS PIRATE! THE GAULS GOT AWAY, AND WE FEAR THEY'VE MADE GOOD THEIR ESCAPE NOW!

ONCE THEY'RE OUTSIDE MY TERRITORY, MY DEAR DUBBEL-OSIX, I COULDN'T CARE LESS WHAT THEY DO!

I WISH HE'D STOP WASHING HIS HANDS THE WHOLE TIME!

WELL, NEVER MIND! ASTERIX AND OBELIX ARE BOUND TO GO BACK ON BOARD SHIP, AND WHEN THEY DO WE'LL BE WAITING WITH QUITE A RECEPTION COMMITTEE!

MEANWHILE...

WE'RE COMING TO THE DEAD SEA!

IT MAKES ME SICK, ASTERIX!

I HAVE TO ADMIT THESE MOUNTS ARE RATHER BUMPY!

I DIDN'T MEAN THAT! IT MAKES ME SICK TO THINK OF THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION PRACTISED AGAINST BOARS IN THIS COUNTRY!

?!?

THE SEA!
YIPPEE!!!

IT'S SO HOT, I COULD DO WITH A NICE DIP!

HEY, WAIT!

HERE GOES!

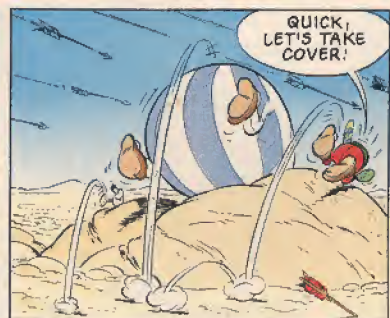
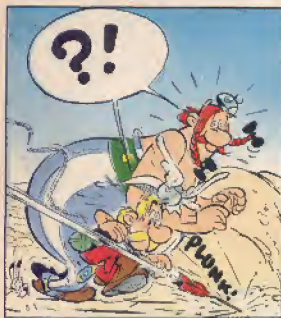
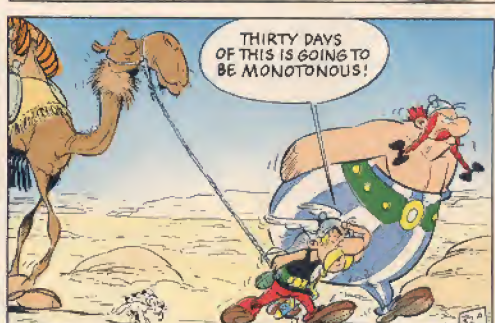
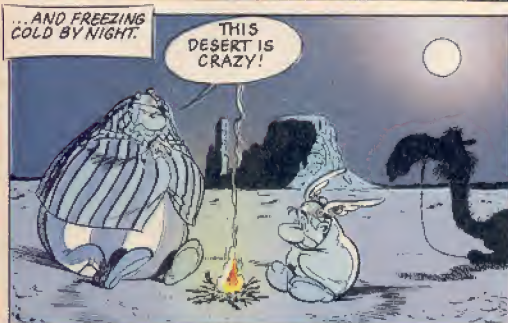
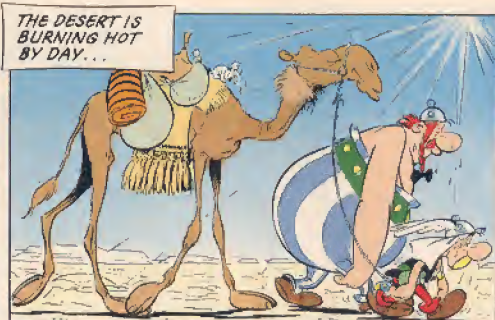
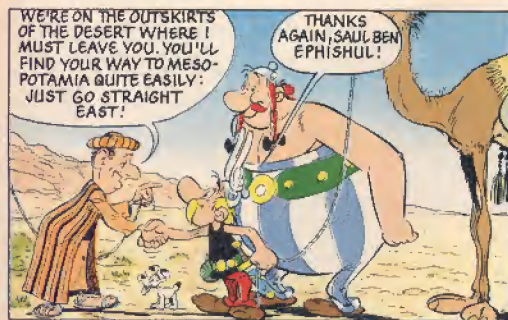
?

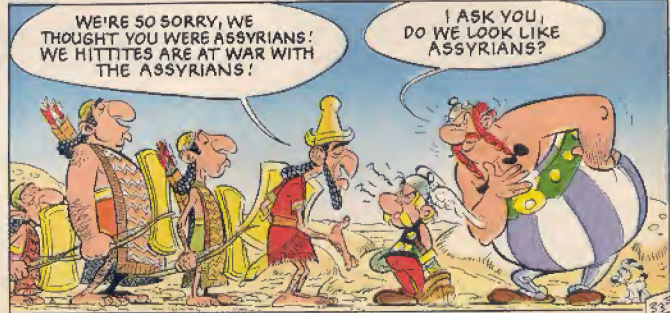
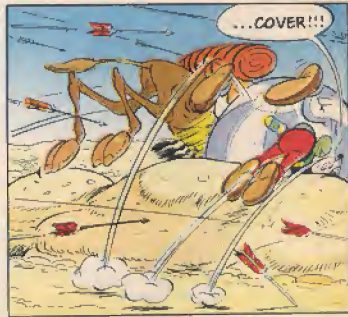
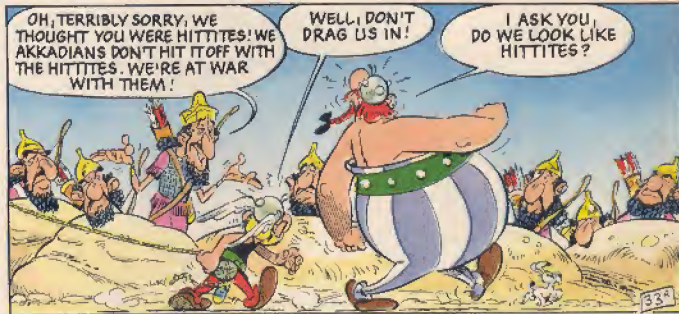
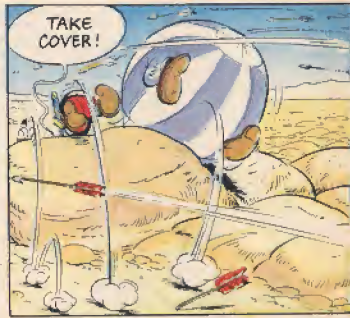
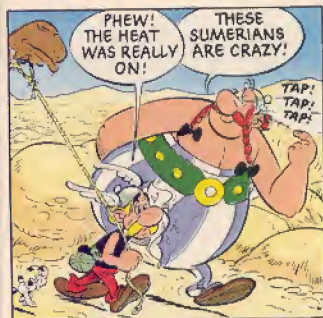
FLOP! FLOP! FLOP! FLOP!

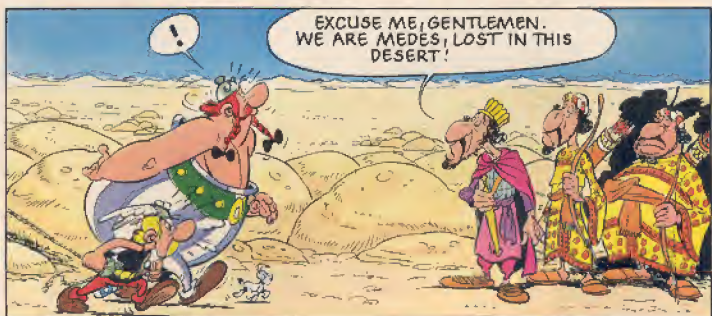
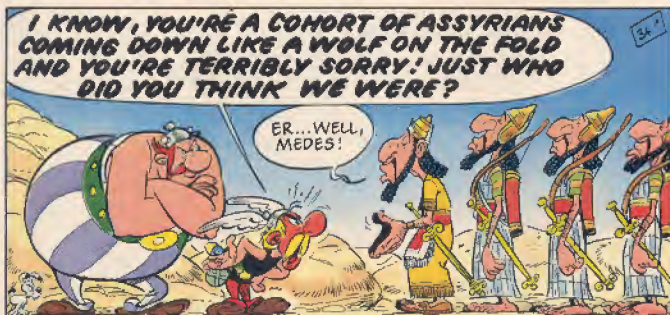
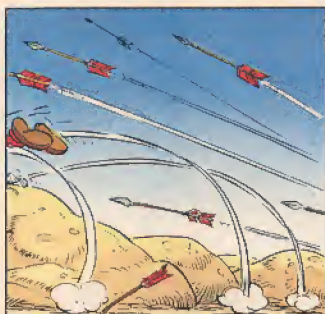
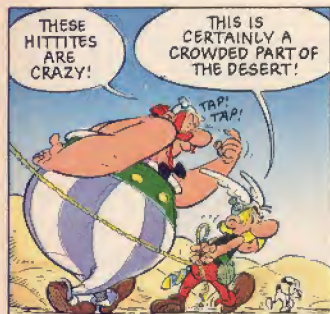
I WAS GOING TO WARN YOU! THE DEAD SEA HAS A SALT CONTENT SIX TIMES HIGHER THAN THAT OF OTHER SEAS, AND ITS DENSITY IS SUCH THAT THE HUMAN BODY JUST FLOATS ON TOP!

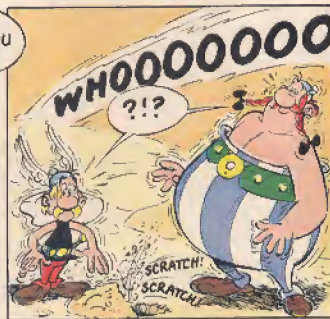
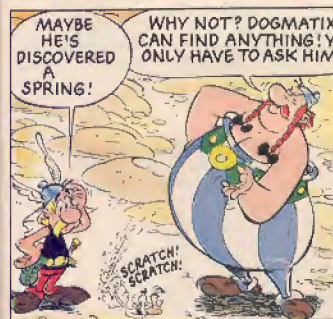
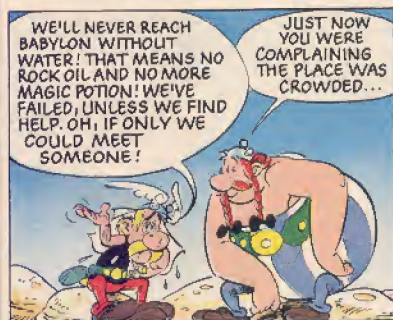
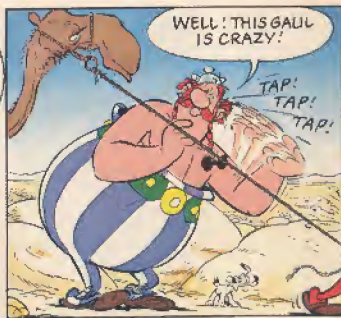
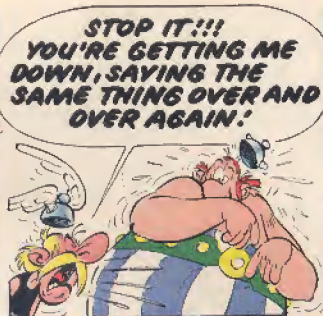
HOHOHO!
HAHA!

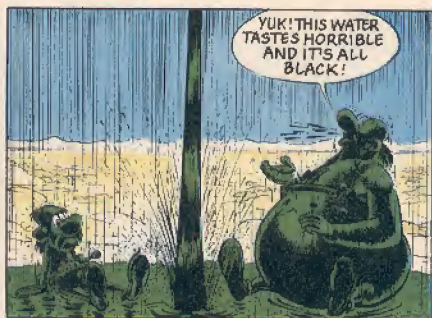
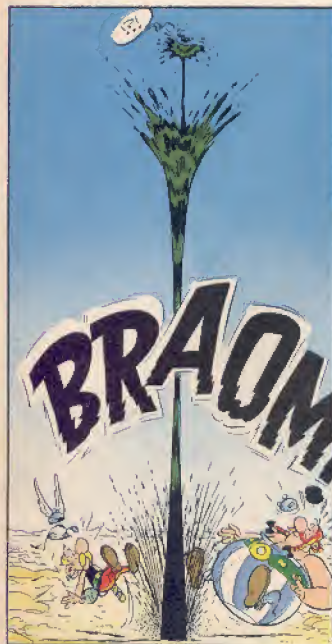
ARF!
ARF!
ARF!



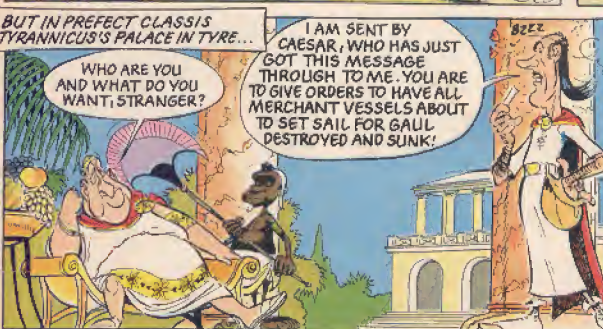
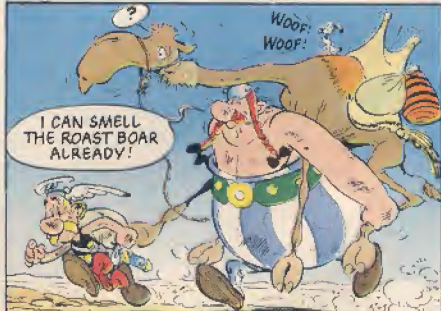








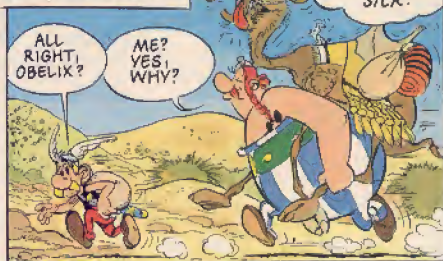
I'VE REPAIRED THE WATER SKIN. LET'S FILL IT WITH OIL AND GET OUT OF THIS DESERT FAST!



TALK ABOUT WINGED WORDS: YOUR MESSENGER DID WELL TO DO THE JOURNEY FROM ROME TO TYRE SO FAST!

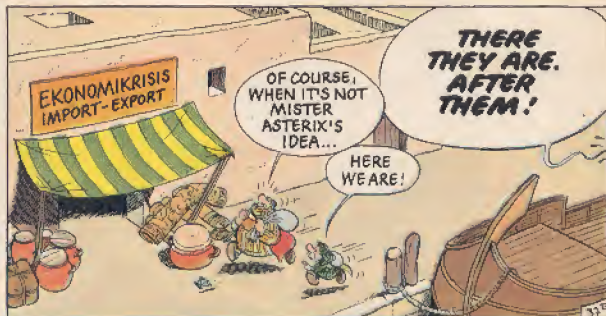
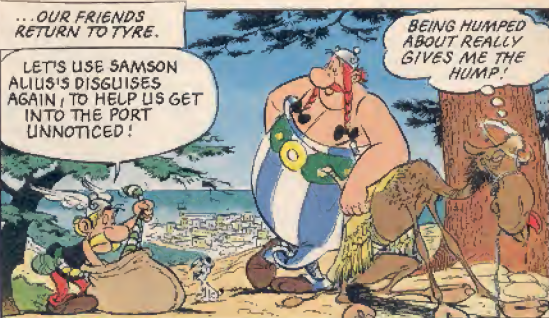
YES, A REALLY TOP FLIGHT MESSENGER!

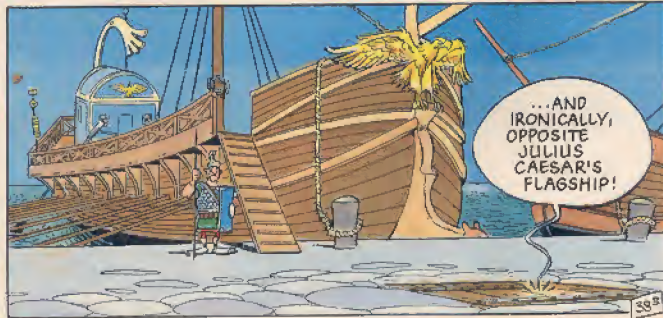
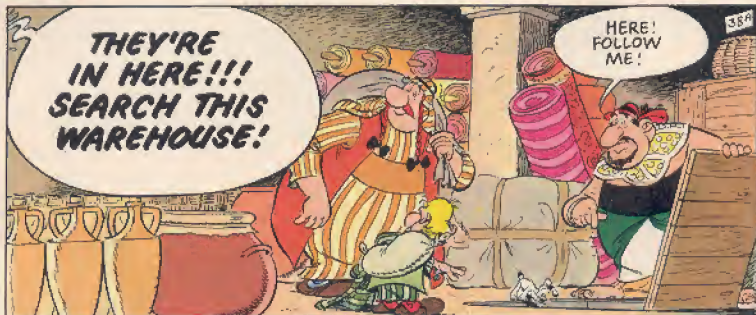
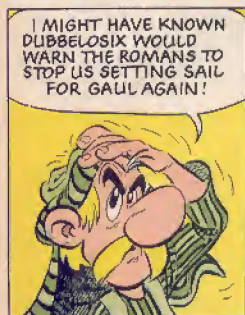
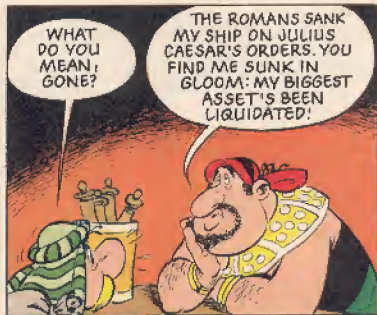
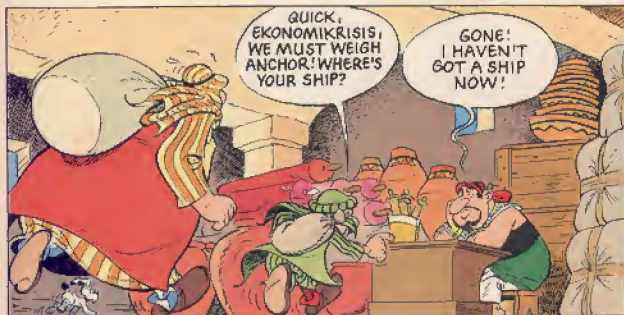
AFTER A TIRING JOURNEY WITH THE SHIP OF THE DESERT...

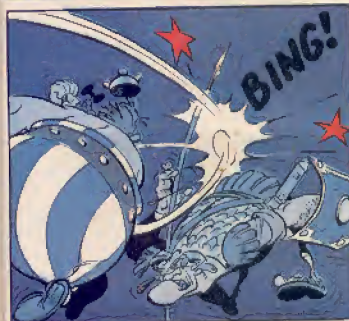
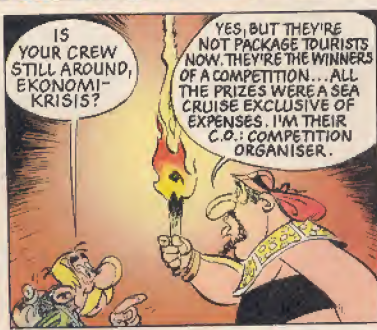
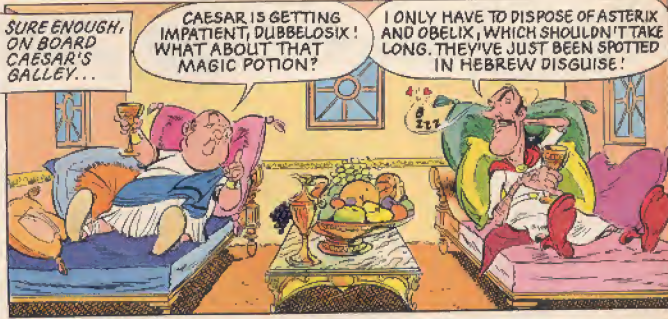
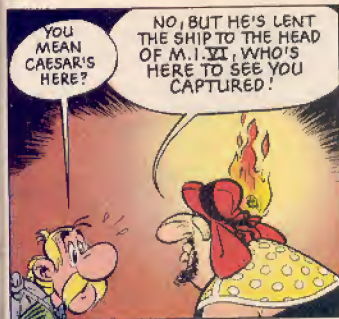


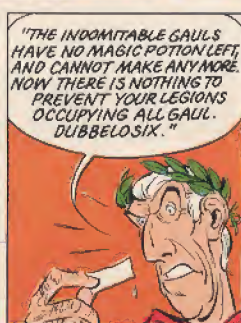
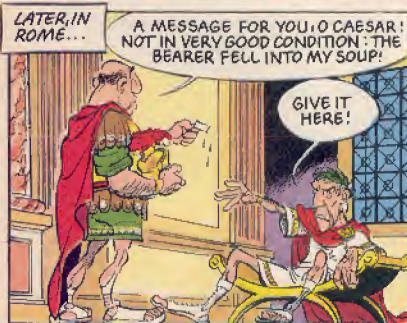
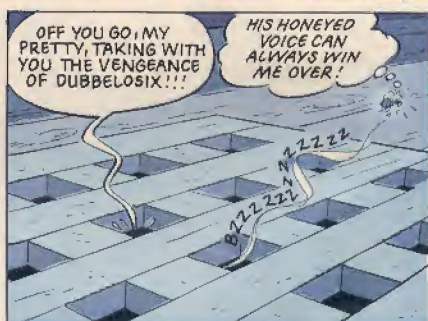
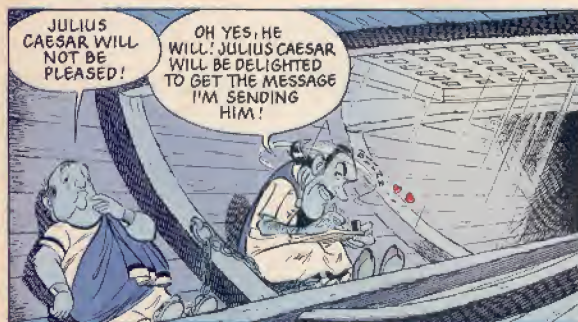
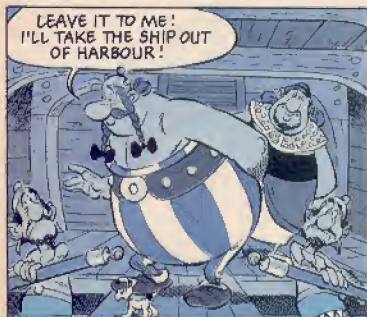
...OUR FRIENDS RETURN TO TYRE.

LET'S USE SAMSON ALIUS'S DISGUISES AGAIN, TO HELP US GET INTO THE PORT UNNOTICED!









THE RETURN JOURNEY IS A PLEASANT IF ROUTINE KIND OF CRUISE...

CUSTOMERS!

PIRATE SHIP AHOY, C.O.!

ROMAN GALLEY TO STARBOARD!

WE'RE NEUTRAL! EVERYONE KNOWS THAT! I WAIVE THIS ONE... LET THE ROMANS RULE THE WAVES!

WE'RE NEUTRAL!
EVERYONE KNOWS THAT!
I WAIVE THIS ONE...LET
THE ROMANS RULE THE
WAVES!

LATER...

FOUR THOUSAND SESTERTII!! THAT'S IT!

BUT THAT'S TWICE LAST TIME'S PRICE!

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH THE INFLATION!

GOLDEN PUMPKIN

BUT
THAT'S
TWICE LAST
TIME'S
PRICE!

YOU
KNOW HOW
IT IS WITH THE
INFLATION!

HOW
WOULD YOU LIKE TO
GO INTO BUSINESS
WITH ME!

AVE
ATQUE
VALE!

NEVER MIND THE
VEILED REFERENCES,
HOW AM I GOING TO
SELL THIS LOT?

FLOAT A COMPANY!

WELL, WE ARE BRINGING ROCK OIL BACK TO GAUL IN SPIE OF YOU, DUBBELSIX!

I'M NOT
SO SURE ABOUT
THAT!

NO, OBELIX!
NOOOO!

AND THE WATERS OF THE CHANNEL ARE POLLUTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY.

**OH NO!
DON'T SAY
YOU'RE STARTING
ALREADY?!**

WOOF!
WOOF!

